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UNHCR ACTIVITIES FINANCED BY VOLUNTARY FUNDS: REPORT FOR 1993-1994 AND PROPOSED PROGRAMMES AND BUDGET FOR 1995

PART II. ASIA AND OCEANIA

Section 11 - Viet Nam

(submitted by the High Commissioner)

GE.94-03133

II.11 VIET NAM

Country overview

Characteristics of the refugee and returnee population

1. As of 31 December 1993, the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam hosted almost 5,100 Cambodian refugees all of whom were assisted by UNHCR.

2. A further 25,000 to 30,000 Cambodians of Vietnamese ethnic origin came to Viet Nam in April 1993. The majority came by boat, with about one third travelling over land.

3. In 1993, a total of 19,233 Vietnamese asylum-seekers who had been determined not to be refugees, returned to Viet Nam from ASEAN countries, as well as Hong Kong and Japan. Of this group, 450 Vietnamese returned from Hong Kong under the Orderly Return Programme (ORP). The cumulative total of Vietnamese returnees by the end of 1993 was 55,514 persons. Among the Cambodian refugees, some 55 per cent were females, while children accounted for approximately 15 per cent. Approximately half of the Vietnamese returnees were adult men, 30 per cent adult women and 20 per cent children. Almost one half of the returnees have between six and nine years of education while one third have less than 5 years of general education (38 per cent).

Major developments (1993 and first quarter 1994)

4. Recent developments in Cambodia have diminished the chances of large numbers of Cambodians returning to Cambodia. The Vietnamese authorities are therefore considering establishing criteria which would permit their local settlement in the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.

5. The majority of Cambodians of Vietnamese ethnic origin who came to Viet Nam in 1993 have spontaneously resettled in the eight provinces in southern Viet Nam.

6. It is estimated that one third of this group have relatives in Viet Nam with whom they have been able to find temporary residence. Others have become locally integrated with the assistance of the provincial authorities, the Vietnamese Red Cross and UNHCR.

7. Due to the slow rate of return of Vietnamese nationals during the first half of 1993, the objective of receiving 30,000 returnees from first asylum countries was revised downwards to 20,000 persons. Discussions are underway with the Vietnamese Red Cross to provide support to vulnerable returnees, who suffer from physical, mental or psychological disabilities.

Programme objectives and priorities

8. The plan to promote voluntary repatriation for Cambodian refugees in Viet Nam has been suspended until the situation in Cambodia has improved and it is considered safe for return. Assistance will be provided to facilitate the local

settlement of these Cambodians, especially the needy, such as the elderly or those who have no relatives in Cambodia.

9. UNHCR will also assist the Cambodian refugees in their application for family reunion in third countries through the relevant embassies in Viet Nam.

10. In 1994, no material assistance is planned by UNHCR for Cambodians of Vietnamese ethnic origin who came to Viet Nam in 1993. The World Food Programme (WFP) has, however, recently approved a budget of an amount of $ 640,118 for the local purchase of rice and cooking oil for this group.

11. UNHCR will continue to assist Vietnamese returnees from the first asylum countries in the region to facilitate their reintegration into the local communities. The assistance comprises cash grants and the implementation of micro projects which will also benefit the local community.

12. UNHCR will conduct monitoring visits to returnees in their places of residence in accordance with the provisions of the Comprehensive Plan of Action for Indo-Chinese refugees (CPA) and 1988 Memorandum of Understanding between the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam and UNHCR.

13. As the number of returnees increases, additional staff will be recruited in 1994 to ensure the delivery of reintegration assistance and monitoring of returnees.

Arrangements for implementation/related inputs

14. UNHCR assistance to Cambodian refugees has been provided, since their arrival in 1978, through the Comité de Gestion, an organization created by the Vietnamese authorities. WFP has taken over the responsibility of providing food (rice and cooking oil).

15. With the arrival in 1993 of Cambodians of Vietnamese ethnic origin, immediate relief assistance was provided by the Vietnamese Red Cross with financial support from the International Federation of Red Cross Societies (IFRC). WFP provides food commodities while UNHCR provided one time emergency assistance upon their arrival in 1993.

16. UNHCR reintegration assistance to returning Vietnamese has been provided through the Ministry of Labour, War Invalids and Social Affairs to various provinces to which the Vietnamese have returned.

17. In addition, UNHCR provides assistance through the Ministry of Interior to cover the costs of interviewing delegations, the care of returnees in the Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City reception centres and their local transportation to provinces and districts of origin. Care for unaccompanied minors is provided through the Nordic Assistance to Returning Vietnamese (NARV). A vocational training project is financed through the Japan International Volunteer Centre (JIVC). A vocational training programme for women is financed by UNHCR through the Women's Union of Hai Phong.

18. The European Union has established a European Community International Programme (ECIP) which provides reintegration assistance in the form of credit schemes, vocational training, micro-projects and job creation for Vietnamese returnees and the local population.

General Programmes

Emergency Fund

19. Emergency assistance was provided through an allocation from the Emergency Fund to some 25,000 to 30,000 Cambodian refugees of Vietnamese ethnic origin who came to southern Viet Nam in April 1993. The assistance covered emergency needs in the form of shelter, fishing equipment, water supplies and sanitation facilities, cash grants to purchase agricultural tools and other inputs to start up small business activities in order to help them become settled locally. WFP provided funds for the local purchase of rice and cooking oil for this group. No assistance is planned for this group in 1994.

Local settlement

(a) **Variations in planned activities in 1993**

20. Some 5,000 Cambodian refugees in four camps near Ho Chi Minh City and in Song Be province were provided with supplementary food commodities, health care and assistance for the improvement of basic infrastructure such as local health facilities and schools.

21. The plan to repatriate this group to Cambodia in 1994 has been suspended given recent political developments in Cambodia.

(b) **1994 planned implementation**

22. The original planned programme of assistance to Cambodian refugees has had to be adjusted as repatriation is now not feasible.

23. The Vietnamese authorities are now considering establishing certain criteria which would permit their local settlement in Viet Nam. UNHCR plans to provide final individual assistance to needy refugees by mid-June 1994.

(c) **1995 programme proposals**

24. There are no plans to continue this project in 1995.

Resettlement

(a) **Variations in planned activities in 1993**

25. In 1993, a total of 591 Cambodian refugees were assisted to resettle on family reunion or humanitarian grounds in Australia, Canada, France and the United States of America.

26. The budget was revised downwards as there were fewer beneficiaries than originally planned. This project covered pre-departure costs as well as local and international transportation arranged by the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

(b) **1994 planned implementation**

27. UNHCR plans to provide assistance to the same number of Cambodian refugees in Viet Nam who are qualified for resettlement in third countries as in 1993. Resettlement assistance will be phased out by the end of 1994.

Special Programmes

Comprehensive Plan of Action for Indo-Chinese Refugees (CPA)

(a) **Variations in planned activities in 1993**

28. In the course of 1993, a total of 19,233 Vietnamese asylum seekers returned to Viet Nam, the highest yearly total since the inception of the Comprehensive Plan of Action in 1989. This brought the total number of returnees to over 55,000 as of the end of the year. Individual reintegration assistance continued to be given to each returnee, though the amount was reduced from $ 360 to $ 240 per person for those who did not volunteer before 1 November 1993, or within three months of the refugee status determination process being completed.

29. In addition to individual reintegration assistance, UNHCR financed 89 micro-projects in local communities where returnees are concentrated. This included school dispensaries, roads, bridges, processing plants, irrigation schemes and agriculture. The reception/transit centres were expanded to increase their capacity to accommodate returnees.

30. Costs for the interviewing and processing of applicants, domestic transportation and the reception and care of unaccompanied minors were also covered under this project.

(b) **1994 planned implementation**

31. Assistance for the reintegration of Vietnamese returnees is expected to continue in 1994. One of the objectives established by the Steering Committee of the International Conference on Indo-Chinese Refugees (ICIR) was that all non-refugees remaining in first asylum countries should return by the end of 1995.

32. Emphasis will continue to be on the provision of reintegration assistance, the implementation of micro-projects to assist local communities, local transportation, the interviewing and processing of applicants and care in returning unaccompanied minors. It is expected that, with the return of the remaining unaccompanied minors in 1994, Nordic Assistance to Returning Vietnamese (NARV) will complete its activities in this field. The European Community International Programme (ECIP) will also come to an end in 1994.

(c) **1995 programme proposals**

33. In line with objectives established by the Steering Committee of the ICIR, it is expected that 1995 will see the completion of the Vietnamese returnee programme with a further 30,000 returning in the course of the year. UNHCR assistance will be provided along the same lines as in previous years. Following completion of activities in 1995, it is foreseen that various aspects of the CPA will be gradually brought to a conclusion.

Programme delivery and administrative support costs

(a) **Variations in planned activities in 1993**

34. In 1993, total expenditure was lower than expected. Savings were realised under local travel which was lower with a reduced number of in-country travel. Under general operating expenses, expenditures were also lower since renovation work foreseen for both the Branch Office premises in Hanoi and renovation of the office in Ho Chi Minh City were not undertaken in 1993. Under the chapter for acquisition of permanent equipment, the provision made for the purchase of various equipment was not fully utilized, since computer equipment purchased was less expensive than estimated and the purchase of several other items were deferred to 1994.

(b) **1994 planned implementation**

35. The total revised 1994 requirements are higher than the initial estimates. In order to cope with the ever growing workload in dealing with administration and personnel matters and with more staff members monitoring the return of the Vietnamese asylum-seekers, two international posts of Administrative Officer and Personnel Assistant have been established, effective 1 July 1994. In addition, the Vietnamese Government has agreed to the direct recruitment, by UNHCR, of some 30 local support staff in Hanoi and in Ho Chi Minh City, who had so far been seconded to UNHCR through the Vietnamese Service Bureau. Consequently, costs for salaries and common staff costs have increased.

36. Under non-staff costs, local travel costs have been reduced, taking into account expenditure trends in 1993. General operating expenses have been increased to take account of repair and renovation works which could not be undertaken in 1993. The provision under the chapter for acquisition of furniture, equipment and vehicles has also been increased to allow for the purchase and replacement of old office furniture and office equipment which was deferred from 1993, including one office vehicle, one photocopier, one laptop computer and one air-conditioner for the Working Group in Ho Chi Minh City.

(c) **1995 programme proposals**

37. The total 1995 initial estimate is higher than the 1994 revised budget as a result of staff increases in the second half of 1994, and consequently, estimates for staff costs are higher. On the other hand, estimates under all other budget chapters are lower than the 1994 revised requirements. Costs for travel on official business are expected to be lower, with the anticipated discontinuation of procurement missions outside the country. General operating expenses and

needs under office supplies and materials are also estimated to be slightly lower. Provision has been made for the purchase of one office vehicle for the Branch Office in Hanoi and for the acquisition and upgrading of computer equipment in Ho Chi Minh City.

UNHCR EXPENDITURE IN VIET NAM

(in thousands of United States dollars)

1993	1994		1995	
AMOUNT OBLIGATED	ALLOCATION APPROVED BY 1993 EXCOM	PROPOSED REVISED ALLOCATION	SOURCE OF FUNDS AND TYPE OF ASSISTANCE	PROPOSED ALLOCATION/ PROJECTION
GENERAL PROGRAMMES (1)				
496.0	–	–	EMERGENCY FUND	–
120.0	79.2	350.0	LOCAL SETTLEMENT	–
18.8	40.0	20.0	RESETTLEMENT	–
634.8	**119.2**	**370.0**	**SUB-TOTAL OPERATIONS**	**0.0**
634.8	**119.2**	**370.0**	**T O T A L (1)**	**0.0**
SPECIAL PROGRAMMES (2)				
14,769.7	13,757.8	13,282.0	COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OF ACTION	11,705.9
–	–	1,599.5	PROGRAMME DELIVERY	1,535.5
–	–	128.5	ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT	246.4
0.8	–	–	OTHER TRUST FUNDS	–
66.4	44.1	55.0	ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT Junior Professional Officer	55.0
14,836.9	**13,801.9**	**15,065.0**	**T O T A L (2)**	**13,542.8**
15,471.7	**13,921.1**	**15,435.0**	**GRAND TOTAL (1+2)**	**13,542.8**